

## The cōforte of louers

The comfozte of louers made and compyled by Steuen Hawes somtyme grome of the honourable chambze of our late souerayne lord kynge Henry 8. seuenth (whose soule god pardon): In the seconde yere of the reygne of our most naturall souerayne lord kynge Henry the eyght.





**The prohemye.**



**D**e gentyll poetes/ vnder cloudy fygures  
Do touche a trouth/ and clokeit subtyll  
Harde is to cōstrue poetycall scriptures  
They are so fayned/ & made sētēcyously  
For som do wyte of loue by fables pryue  
Some do endyte/ vpon good mozaitye (ly  
Of chyualtrous actes/ done in antyquyte

Whose fables and stozyes ben pastymes pleasaunt  
To lordes and ladyes/ as is theyr lykynge  
Dyuers to mozaitye/ ben oft attendaunt  
And many delpte to rede of louynge  
Youth loueth aduenture/ pleasure and lykynge  
Age foloweth polycy/ sadnesse and prudence  
Thus they do dyscre/ eche in experyence

I ytell oz nought/ experte in this scyence  
Compyle suche bokes/ to deuoyde ydlenes  
Besechynge the reders/ with all my deuygence  
Where as I offende/ for to correct doubtles  
Submyttinge me to theyr grete gentylnes  
As none hystoziagrasse/ nor poete laureate  
But gladly wolde folowe/ the makynge of Lydgate

*Chaucer's*

First noble Gower/ mozaityes dyde endyte  
And after hym Chaucers/ grete bokes delectable  
Lyke a good phylosophy/ meruaylously dyde wyte  
After them Lydgate/ the monke commendable  
Made many wonderfull bokes moche profyt able  
But syth they are deed / & theyr bodyes layde in chest  
I pray to god to gyue theyr soules good rest

**Finis prohemii.**





When fayre was phebus/ w<sup>th</sup> his beemes bryght  
Amptodes of gemynp/ aloft the firmament  
Without blacke cloudes/ castynge his pured lyght  
With sorowe opprest/ and grete incombement  
Remembrynge well/ my lady excellent  
Saynge o fortune helpe me to preuaile  
For thou knowest all my paynfull trauaile

I went than musynge/ in a medowe grene  
Myselfe alone/ amonge the floures in dede  
With god aboue/ the futertens is sene  
To god I sayd/ thou mayst my mater spede  
And me rewarde/ accordynge to my mede  
Thou knowest the trouthe/ I am to the true  
Whan that thou lyst/ thou mayst them all subdue

Who dyde preserue the yonge edyppus  
Whiche sholde haue be slayne by calculacyon  
To deuoyde grete thynges/ the story sheweth vs  
That were to come/ by true reuelacyon  
Takynge after theyr hole operacyon  
In this edyppus/ accordynge to affecte  
Theyr cursed calkynge/ holly to abiecte

Who dyde preserue/ Jonas and moyses  
Who dyde preserue yet many other mo  
As the byble maketh mencyon doubles  
Who dyde kepe Charles frome his euill fo  
Who was he/ that euer coude do so  
But god alone/ than in lyke wyse maye he  
Kepe me full sure/ frome all iniquyte

The con. of 10.

A.ii.



Thus as I called to my remembraunce  
Suche trewe examples / I tenderly dyde wepe  
Remembryng well / goddes hyghe ordynance  
Syghyng full oft / with inwarde teres depe  
Tyll at the last / I fell in to a slepe  
And in this slepe / me thought I dyde repayre  
My selfe alone / in to a garden fayre

This goodly gardyn / I dyde well beholde  
where I sawe a place / ryght gaye and gloryous  
with golden turrets / paynted many a folde  
Lyke a place of pleasure moste solacyous  
The wyndowes glased / with crystall precyous  
The golden fanes / with wynde and melody  
By dulcet sounde / and meruaylous armony

The knottes flagraunt / with aromatyke odoure  
with goodly sprynges / of meruaylous mountaynes  
I dyde than tast / the redolent lycoure  
Most clere and swete / of the goodly baynes  
whiche dyde me ease / somewhat of my paynes  
Tyll to me came / a lady of goodly age  
Apareyled sadly / and demure of bysage

To me she sayd / me thynke ye are not well  
ye haue caught colde / and do lyue in care  
Tell me your mynde / now shortly euerydele  
To layne the trouthe / I charge you to beware  
I shall for you / a remedy prepare  
Dyspeyre you not / for no thyng that is past  
Tell me your mynde / and be nought agast



Alas madame/vnto her than I sayd  
It is no wonder/of myne inwarde payne  
yf that my herte be meruayllously dysmayde  
My trouthe and loue/therof is cause certayne  
Dyuers yeres ago/I dyde in mynde retayne  
A lady yonge/a lady fayre of syght  
Good//wyle/and goodly/an holsome sterre of lyght

I durst not speke vnto her of my loue  
Yet vnder coloure I dyuers bokes dyde make  
Full pryuely/to come to my aboue  
Thus many nyghtes/I watched for her sake  
To her and to hers/my trouthe well to take  
Without ony spotte/of ony maner yll  
God knoweth all myn herte/my mynde & my wyll

The hygh dame nature/by her grete myght & power  
Man/beest/and foule/in euery degre  
fro whens they came at euery maner houre  
Dooth trye the trouthe/without duplycte  
For euery thyng must shewe the properte  
Gentyll vngentyll/dame nature so well tryet  
That all persones it openly espyeth

The lord and knyght/delyteth for to here  
Cronycles and storpes/of noble chyualry  
The gentyll man gentylnes / for his passe tyme clere  
The man of lawe/to here lawe truely  
The yeman delyteth to talke of yomanry  
The ploman his londe for to ere and some  
Thus nature werketh/in hys degre and lowe  
The con. of lo. A.iii.



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The con. of lo.

A.iii.



For yf there were one of the gentyll blode  
Conuayde to yomanry for nourysshement  
Dyscrecyon comen he sholde chaunge his mode  
Though he knewe not his parentes herament  
Yet nature wolde werke/so by entendymment  
That he sholde folowe/the condycyons doubtles  
Of his true blode/by outwarde gentylnes

In all this worlde/ben but thynges twayne  
As loue and hate/the trouth for to tell  
And yf I sholde hate my lady certayne  
Than worthy I were/to dye of deeth cruell  
Seynge all ladyes/that she doth excell  
In beaute/grace/prudence and meeknes  
What man on lyue/can more in one expres

yf she with me sholde take dyspleasure  
Whiche loueth her by honoures desyre  
What sholde she do/with such a creature  
That hateth her/by inwarde fraude and yre  
I yet a louer/do not so atyre  
My fayth and hope/I put in her grace  
Releace to graunt me/by good tyme and space

Thretened with sorowe/of may paynes grete  
Thre yeres ago my ryght hande I dyde bynde  
fro my browes for fere/p drops doune dyde sweet  
God knoweth all it was nothyng my mynde  
Unto no persone/I durst my her to vntwynde  
yet the trouth knowynge/the good gretest I  
Waxe me releace/of all my/p/p/p/thre



Now ryght fayre lady / so sadde and demure  
My mynde ye knowe / in euery maner thyng  
I trust for trouthe / ye wyll not me dyscure  
Sythes I haue shewed you without lesynge  
At your request / the cause of my mournynge  
Whiche abyde in sorowe / in my remembraunce  
Without good conforste / saufe of esporaunce

Fayre sone sayd she / sythens I knowe your thought  
your worde and dede / and here to be one  
Dyspayre you not / for it auayleth nought  
Joye cometh after / whan the payne is gone  
Conforste your selfe / and muse not so alone  
Doubt ye no thyng / but god wyll so agre  
That at the last / ye shall your lady se

Be alwaye meke / let wysdome be your guyde  
Aduenture for honoure / and put your selfe in pzeace  
Clymbe not to fast / lest sodenly ye slyde  
Let god werke styll / he wyll your mynde encrece  
Begynne no warre / be gladde to kepe the peace  
Prepence no thyng / agaynst the honoure  
Of ony lady / by fraudulent fauoure

Alas madame / vnto her than sayd I  
Aboue .xx. woulues / dyde me touse and rent  
Not longe agoone / delynge moost shamefully  
That by theyr tuggynge / my lyfe was nere spent  
I dyde perceyue / somwhat of theyr entente  
As the trouthe is knowen / vnto god aboue  
My ladies fader they dyde lytell loue



Seynge they? falshode/and they? subtylte  
For fere of deth/where as I loued best  
I dyde dyspryse/to knowe they? cruelte  
Somwhat to wysdome/accordeinge to behest  
Though that my body had but lytell rest  
My herte was trewe vnto my ladyes blood  
For all they? dedes I thought no thyng but good

Some had wende the hous for to swepe  
Fought was they? besom/ I holde it set on fyre  
The inwarde wo in to my herte dyde crepe  
To god aboue/ I made my hole desyre  
Saynge o good lord of heuenly empyre  
Let the mouut with all braunches swete  
Entyerly growe/god gyue vs grace to mete

Soma had wened for to haue made an ende  
Of my bokes/before he hadde begynnynge  
But all vayne they dyde so comprehend  
Whan they of them lacke vnderstandynge  
Waynfull was & is they? mysse contruyng  
Who lyst the trouthe of them for to enluse  
For the reed and whyte they wyte full true

Well sayd this lady I haue perceueraunce  
Of our bokes/whiche that ye endyte  
So as ye saye is all the cyrcumstaunce  
Vnto the hyghe pleasure of the reed and the whyte  
Which hath your trouthe/and wyll you acquyte  
Doubte ye no thyng/but at the last ye maye  
Of your true mynde yet fynde a Joyfull daye



Forsothe I sayd by dayne and straungenesse  
I fere them sore and fals reporte  
I wolde they were in waerde all doubtles  
Lyke as I was without conforzte  
Than wolde I thynke my lady wolde resorte  
Unto dame mercy my payne to consyder  
God knoweth all I wolde we were togpyder

Though in meane season of grene grasse I fede  
It wolde not graunte me / yf she knewe my heuynesse  
My trauayle is grete / I praye god be my spede  
To resyste the myght of myn enemyes subtiltesse  
Whiche awaite to take me by the doubtenesse  
My wysdome is lytel / yet god may graunt me grace  
Them to defende / in every maner of cace

Herne this she sayd / yf that you can by wytt  
Of foes make frendes / they wyll be to you sure  
yf that they frendshyp be vnto you knytte  
It is oft stedfast / and wyll longe endure  
yf alwaye malyce / they wyll put in hys  
No doubt it is / than god so hyght and stronge  
Full meruaylously / wyl soone reuenge they wronge

And now she sayd come on your waye with me  
Unto a goodly toure whiche is solacpous  
Beholde it yonder / full of felycyte  
Quadrant it was / me thought full meruaylous  
With golden turrettes / gaye and glozvous  
Gargayled with greyphoides / and with many lyons  
Made of fyne golde / with dyuers sondry dragons



The wyndowes by pall / without resplendy shant  
 The fayre yuery / coloured with grene  
 And all aboute there was dependaunt  
 Grete gargyles of golde / full meruaylously besene  
 Neuer was made a fayrer place I wene  
 The ryght excellenc lady toke her intresse  
 Ryght so dyde I by meruaylous swetnesse

Whan we came in / I dyde aboute beholde  
 The goodly temple / with pynacles vp sette  
 Wherin were ymages / of kynges all of golde  
 With dyuers scrippitures / without any lette  
 Aloft the rooffe / were emeraudes full grette  
 Set in fyne golde / with amiable rudyes  
 Endented with dyamondes / and many turkyes

The wyndowes by storied / with many noble kynges  
 The pylers Jasper / dyuersed with a lute  
 By pendaunt penacles / of many noble kynges  
 The pauement calcedony / beyng fayre and lute  
 The aras golde / with the story pure  
 Of the syche of thebes / with actes auenturous  
 Of ryght noble knyghes / hardy and chualtrous

Than sayd this lady / I must now go hence  
 Passe ye tyme here / accordyng to your lpyng  
 It maye fortune / your lady of excellence  
 Wyl passe her tyme here / soone by walkyng  
 Than maye she se / your dolefull mournyng  
 And fare ye well / I maye no lenger tary  
 Marke well my lesson / and from it do not vary

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Whan she was gone the temple all alonge  
I went my selfe with syghtes grete and feruent  
Alas I sayd with inwarde paynes stronge  
My herte doth blede now all to torne and rent  
For lacke of conforzte my herte is almost spent  
O meruelo<sup>s</sup> fortune / whiche hast i loue me brought  
Where is my conforzte that I so longe haue sought

O wonderfull loue / whiche fell vnto my lotte  
O loue ryght clene / without any thought vntue  
Syth thy fyrst louyng / not blemysed with spotte  
But euermore / the falseshede to extue  
O doloious payne / whiche doste renue  
O pyteous herte / where is the helthe and boote  
Of thy lady / that perst the at the roote

What thyng is loue / that causeth suche turment  
From whens cometh it / me thynke it is good questyō  
Yf it be nature / from nature it is sent  
Loue maye come of kynde by true affeccyon  
Loue may appetyte / by naturall eleccyon  
Than must loue nedes be / I per: eue it in mynde  
A thyng fyrst gguen / by the god of kynde

Alas o nature / why mayst not thou truely  
Cause my lady loue / as thou hast me constrayned  
Hath she power to dompne the utterly  
Why mayst not thou / cause her be somewhat payned  
With natures moeuyng / for loue is not fapned  
Alas for sorowe / why madest thou her so fayre  
Without to loue / that she lyst soone repayre.



Chaucer

Two thynges me conforste/ever in pryncypall  
The fyrst bebookes/made in antyquyte  
By Gower and Chaucers/poetes rethorpcall  
And Lydgate eke/by good auctoryte  
Makynge mencyon/of the felycyte  
Of my lady and me/by dame fortunes chaunce  
To mete togyders/by wonderull ordynance

The seconde is/where fortune dooth me byynge  
In many placys/I se by prophesy  
As in the stozys/of the olde buyldynge  
Letters for my lady/depeynted wonderly  
And letters for me/besydde her meruayllously  
Agreyng well/bnto my bokes all  
In dyuers placys/I se it in generall

O loue moost dere/o loue nere to my harte  
O gentyll floure/I wolde you knewe my wo  
How that your beaute/perst me with the darte  
With your vertue/and your mekenes also  
Sythens ye so dyde/it is ryght longe ago  
My herte doth se you/it is for you bebledde  
Myne even with teeres/ben often made full redde

Where are ye now/the floure of Joye and grace  
Whiche myght me conforste/in this inwarde sorowe  
Myne excellent lady/it is a ryght pyteous case  
Good be my guyde/and saynt George vnto bozowe  
O clere Aurora/the sterre of the morowe  
Whiche many yeres/with thy benies mercy  
Hath me awaked/to se thyne emyspery



As as I mourned / I sawe than apper  
The goodly myzours dependaunt on the wall  
Set in fyne golde bozded with stones clere  
The glasses pure / they were of crystall  
Made longe ago to be memorypall  
And vnder the fyrst glasse ryght fayre wyrtten was  
Beholde thy selfe / and thy fautes or thou passe

By a sylken threde / small as onp heere  
ouer I sawe hange / a swerde full ponderous  
Without a scauberde / full sharpe for to fere  
The poynt downwarde / ryght harde and asperous  
All this I sawe / with hert full dolorous  
Yet at auenture / to se the mystery  
In the myzoure / I loked than full sodenly

In this glasse I sawe / how I had ledde my lyfe  
Sythens the tyme of my dyscrecyon  
As vnto wyldnesse / alwaye affymatye  
Folowynge the pleasure / of wylfull amonycyon  
Not vnto vertue / haupnge intencion  
Ihesu sayd I / thou hast me well p̄serued  
From this swerdes fall / whiche I haue oft deserued

O ye estates / aloft on fortunes whele  
Remembre this swerde / whiche ouer you dependeth  
Beware the fall / befoze that ye it fele  
Se your one euyl / se what vengeaunce ensueth  
Correcte none other / whan that your fautes reuueeth  
Calke not not goddes power / byef not þ tens future  
Beholde this glasse / se how he may endure

The con. of lo.

B.i.



any one wyllyng / by nature lens to drete  
By calculacyon goddes power to withstande  
Bathynge theyr swerdes / in blode by myschefe  
Tyll at the last as I do vnderstande  
This swerde doth fal by the myght of goddes hande  
Upon them all / whiche wolde his power abate  
Than they repent but than it is to late

This goodly myzour / I ryght well behelde  
Remembryng well / my dedes done in tymes past  
I toke for wytte / than for to be my shelde  
By grace well armed / not to be agast  
Thus as I stode I dyde se at the last  
The seconde myzour / as bryght as phebus  
Set rounde about / with stones pprecious

Ouer whiche dyde hāge / a foure of golde ryght fyne  
Wherin was set / an emeraude full bryght  
Ryght large and grete / whiche wonderfull dyde shyne  
That me thought it was / grete conforzte to my syght  
Bordred w dyamondes / castyng a meruaylo<sup>us</sup> lyght  
This floure dyde hange / by a ryght subtyll gynne  
With a chayne of yron / and many a pryue pyne

Besyde whiche there was / a table of golde  
With a goodly scrypture / enameled of grene  
The sentence wherof / I dyde well beholde  
The whiche sayd thus / it is openly sene  
That many a one / full pryuely dooth wene  
To blynde an other / by crafte and subtylnes  
That ofte blyndeth hym / for all his doublenes



In this myzdour whiche is here besyde  
Thou shalt well lerne / thy selfe for to knowe  
Passe forth no farder / but loke and abyde  
Se what shall come / lest that thou ouer throwe  
A sodayne rysynge dooth oft fall alowe  
Without the grounde / be ryghe sure and perfyte  
Beholde well this glasse / & take thy respyte

Whan thou hast so done / to this floure resorte  
Labour to gete it / from this harde yren chayne  
Vnto the gynnes / vnto thy grete conforste  
yf that thou canst / and take it for thy payne  
To be thy helpe / in thy Journaye certayne  
Lo here the vertues vnder wyten be  
Of this ryall floure in euery degre

This ryche emeraude / who so dooth it bere  
From his fyrst werynge / his syght shal not mynysshe  
Payne of the heed he nedeth not to fere  
By dynt of swerde / he shall neuer peryshe  
Ne no thynge begyn / but he shall well fynyshe  
yf it be ryghtfull afty a true entent  
Without resystence of grete impedymment

Of all nygromancy / and fals enchauntement  
Agaynst hym wrought / he shall knowe the effecte  
They can not blynde hym by cursed sentement  
But he theyr werkes may ryght soone abiecte  
No maner poyson he nedeth io suspecte  
Ne yther in mete not yet in ale ne wyne  
yf it be set well besyde a serpentyne

The con. of lo.

B.ii.



yf he bntreue be vnto his gentyll lady  
 It wyll breke alondre / or crafe than doubtlesse  
 It kepeth close / neuet the auoutry  
 This gentyll emeraude / this stone of rycheffe  
 Hath many mo vertues / whiche I do not expresse  
 As saynt Iohan euangelyst doeth shewe openly  
 Who of his makynge lyst se the lapydary

Whan I had aduerted / in my remembraunce  
 All the maters / vnto the glasse I wente  
 Beholdynge it / by a longe cyrcumstaunce  
 Where as I dyde perceyue well verament  
 How prync malyce / his messengers had sent  
 With subtyll engynes / to lye in a wayte  
 yf that they coude take me with a bayte

I sawe there trappes / I sawe theyr gynnes all  
 I thanked god than / the swete holy goost  
 whiche brought me hyder so well in specyall  
 without whiche inyour / I had ben but loost  
 In god aboue / the lord of myghtes moost  
 I put my trust / for to withstande theyr euill  
 whiche dayly wrought / by the myght of the deuyll

I sawe theyr maysters blacke and tydyous  
 Made by the craft of many a nacyon  
 For to dystrope me / with strokes peryllous  
 To lette my Journaye / as I make relacyon  
 Peryllous was the waye / and the cytacyon  
 Full gladde was I of the vertu of this glasse  
 whiche shewed me / what daungers I sholde passe

I sawe there trappes / I sawe theyr gynnes all  
 I thanked god than / the swete holy goost  
 whiche brought me hyder so well in specyall  
 without whiche inyour / I had ben but loost  
 In god aboue / the lord of myghtes moost  
 I put my trust / for to withstande theyr euill  
 whiche dayly wrought / by the myght of the deuyll



O all ye estates/ of the hygh renowne  
Beware these gynnes/ beware theyr subtylte  
The deuyl is grete/ by to cast downe  
By calculacyon/ of the cursed cruelte  
Of the subtyll beestes/ full of iniquyte  
In the olde tyme what snares were there sette  
By fals calkynge/ to dystroye lordes grete

Than after this to the yron gynne  
I wente anone my wyte for to proue  
By lytell and lytell/ to vndo euery pynne  
Thus in and out/ I dyde the chayne ofte moue  
Yet coude I not come/ vnto myne aboue  
Tyll at the last/ I dyde the crafte espy  
Vndoyng the pynnes/ & chayne full meruaylously

Full gladde was I than/ whan I had this floure  
I kylt it oft/ I behelde the coloure grene  
It swaged ryght well/ myn inwarde doloure  
My eyes confortyd/ with the byghthnes I wene  
This ryall floure/ this emeraude so shene  
Whan I had gotten it by my prudence  
Ryght gladde I was/ of fortunes premynence

O fortune sayd I/ thou arte ryght fauorable  
For many a one/ hath ben by symplytude  
To wyne this floure/ full greterly tendable  
But they the subtylnes/ myght nothyng exclude  
Sythen by wysdome/ I dyde this fraude conclude  
This floure/ I sette nere my harte  
For perfyte loue/ of my fayre ladyes darte

The con. of lo.

B. iij.



So this accomplished/than incontynent  
To the thyrde myzour I went dyrectly  
Beholdynge aboute by good auysement  
Seynge an ymage made full wonderly  
Of the holy goost with flambes ardauntly  
Under whiche I sawe with letters fayre and pure  
In golde well grauen this meruaylous scripture

Frome the fader and the sone my power procedynge  
And of my selfe I god do ryght ofte inspyre  
Dyuers creatures with spyrytuall knowynge  
Inuysyble by dyuine flambynge fyre  
The eyes I entre not it is not my desyre  
I am not coloured of the terrestriall grounde  
Nor entre the eares for I do not sounde

Nor by the nose for I am not myrte  
With any manner of the ayry influence  
Nor by the mouth for I am not fyrte  
For to be swallowed by erthly experyence  
Nor yet by felynge or touchynge exystence  
My power dyuine can not be palpable  
For I my selfe am no thyng manpable

Yet byslyble I may be by good apparaunce  
As in the lykenesse of a doue vnto chryste Ihesu  
At his baptysme I dyde it with good countenaunce  
To shewe our godhed to be hygh and true  
And at his transfiguracion our power to ensue  
In a fayre cloude with clere rayes radyaunt  
ouer hym that I was well apparaunt



Also truely yet at the feast of pentycoste  
To the sones moder and the apostelles all  
In tonges of fyre as god of myghtes moost  
I orde appere shewynge my power spyrytuall  
Enflambynge theyr hertes by vertues supernall  
Whiche after that by languages well  
In euery regyon coude pronounce the gospel

And where I lyst by power dyuine  
I do enspyre oft causynge grete prophesy  
Whiche is my construed whan some do enclyne  
Thynkynge by theyr wytte to perceyue it lyghtly  
Or elles calke with deuyles the trouth to settyfy  
Whiche contrary be to all true saynge  
For deuyles be subtyll and alwaye lyenge

Whan I had aduerted with my dyllygence  
All the scripture I sawe me besyde  
Hage a fayre swerde & shelde of meruailous excellēce  
Whiche to beholde I dyde than abyde  
To blase the armes I dyde well prouyde  
The felde was syluer and in it a medowe grene  
With an olyue tre full meruaylously besene

Two lyons of asure bpon euery syde  
Couchande were truely besyde this olyue tree  
A hande of stele wherin was wyten pryde  
Wyde holde this ryall swerde in certaynte  
A scripture there was whiche sayd by subtylte  
Of a grete lady hondred yeres ago  
In the hande of stele this swerde was closed so



No maner persone may haue this swerde  
 But one persone/chosen in dede  
 Of this ladyes kynred/nor be aferde  
 To touche this hande/his mater for to spede  
 And to vnda it/and take it for his mede  
 But yf that he/be not of the lygnage  
 The hande wyll sle hym/after olde blage

This ryall swerde/that called is prapudence  
 Who can it gette/it hath these vertues thre  
 Fyrt to wyne ryght/without longe resystence  
 Secondly encrease/eth/all trouth and amyte  
 Thyrde of the better throughe duplycyte  
 Be pruely fals/to the orde of chualry  
 The swerdes crosse wyll crase/and shewe it openly

This shelde also/who so dooth it bere  
 Whiche of olde tyme/was called perceuraunce  
 Hath thre vertues/fyrt he nedeth not fere  
 Ony grete blode shede/by wronge incomburaunce  
 Secondly/it wolde make good apparaunce  
 By hete vnto hym/to gyue hym warnynge  
 To be redy/agayst his enemyes comynge

The thyrd is this/yf this calenge be ryghtfull  
 Neuer no swerde/shall throughe his harneys perce  
 Nor make hym bloody/with woundes rufull  
 For he there steength/may ryghtfully reuerce  
 Yet moreouer/as I do well reherce  
 This ryall shelde/in what place it be bozne  
 Shall soone be wonne/and shall not be forlozne

*I knowe not howe I shall be  
 Will I be able to stande  
 I knowe not howe I shall be  
 Will I be able to stande*



These thynges serie / to the thynde myroure clere  
I went anone / and in it loked ryght ofte  
Where in my syght / dyde wonderly appere  
The firmament / with the sonne all alofte  
The wynde not grete / but blowynge fayre and softe  
And belyde the sonne / I sawe a meruaylous sterre  
With beames twayne / the whiche were cast aftere

The one turnynge towarde the sterre agayne  
The other stretched ryght towarde Phebus  
To beholde this sterre / I was somewhat fayne  
But than I mused with herte full dolorous  
Whyder it sygnifyed thynges good or peryllous  
Thus longe I studyed / tyll at the last I thought  
What it sholde meane / as in my herte I sought

This sterre it sygnifyeth the resynge of a knyght  
The bowynge beame agayne so tournynge  
Betokened rattonnes of them whiche by myght  
wolde hym resyst by theyr wronge resystynge  
The beame towarde Phebus clerely shynynge  
Betokened many meruaylous fyres grete  
On them to lyght that wolde his purpose lete

In the fyre clerest of euey element  
God hath appered vnto many a one  
Inspyringe them / with grete wytte refulgent  
who lyst to rede many dayes agone  
Many one wyrteth trouthe / yet cōforte hath he none  
wherfore I fere me / lyke a swarme of bees  
wylde fyre wyllyght amonge a thousande pees



*Sepe cognouerunt me a iuuentute mea: etenim non cognouerunt michi.*  
As the canticles maketh good mencyon  
They haue oft expugned me / syth my yonge age  
yet coude they haue me / in theyr domynyon  
Though many a one / vnhappely do rage  
They shall haue sorowe that shytte me in a cage  
In a grete dyspyte of the holy goost  
He maye thein brenne / theyr caskynge is but loost  
*Supra dorsum meum fabz: cauerunt peccatores: prolongauerunt iniquitatem suam.*  
Upon my backe synners huth fabrysed  
They haue prolonged theyr grete iniquyte  
From daye to daye it is not mynyshed  
Wherfore for vengeaunce by grete extremyte  
It cryeth aboue / now vnto the depte  
Whiche that his mynysters haue suffred so longe  
To lyue in synne and euyl wayes wronge

Whan I had perceyued euery maner thyng  
Of this ryall myzour / accorpyng to effecte  
Remembryng the verses / of the olde sayng  
Whiche in my mynde I dyde well coniecte  
Than to the swerde / I thought to haue respecte  
Ryght so I went / than at all auenture  
Unto the hande / that helde the swerde so sure

I felte the hande / of the stell so fyne  
He thought it quaked / the fyngers gan to stretche  
I thought by that / I came than of the lyne  
Of the grete lady / that fyrst the swerde dyde fetche  
The swerdes pomell / I began to ketch  
The hande swerued / but yet neuer the lesse  
I helde them bothe / by excellent promes



And at the last / I felte the hande departe  
The swerde I toke / with all my besynesse  
So I subdued / all the magykes arte  
And founde the scauberde / of meruaylous rycheſſe  
After that I toke the ſhelde doune doubtlesſe  
Kysſynge the swerde / and the ſhelde ofte I wys  
Thankynge god / the whiche was cause of this

Gladder was I than / of my ryall floure  
Of my swerde and ſhelde / I reioyced alſo  
It pacyfyed well / myn inward doloure  
But fro my ladyes beaute / my mynde myght not go  
I loued her ſurely / for I loued no mo  
Thus my fayre floure / and my swerde and ſhelde  
With eyen ryght meke / full often I behelde

Then ſayd I (well) this is an happy chaunce  
I truſt now ſhortly / my lady for to ſe  
O fortune ſayd I / whiche brought me on the daunce  
Fyrſt to beholde her ryght excellent beaute  
And ſo by chaunce / haſt hyder conueyde me  
Getynge me alſo / my floure my ſhelde and swerde  
I nought myſtruſt the / why ſholde I be aferde

O ryght fayre lady / as the bryght daye ſterre *ex fume lux*  
Shyneth beſore the kyſynge of the ſonne  
Caſtynge her braines / all aboute aferre  
Explynge grete wyndes / and the myſtes donne  
So ryght fayre lady / where as thou dooſt wonne  
Thy beautefull bryghtnes / thy vertue and thy grace  
Dooth clere Illumyne / all thy boure and place



I have the hope of seeing you before  
 you have the pleasure to write  
 me of your success in the  
 study of the French language

This maye I saye/vnto my owne dere loue  
My goodly lady/fayrest and moost swete  
In all my bokes/fayre fortune doth moue  
For a place of grace/where that we sholde mete  
Also my bokes full pꝛyuely you grete  
The effectes therof/dooth well dayly ensue  
By meruelous thynges/to pꝛoue them to be true

The more my payne/the more my loue encreaseth  
The more my Jeopardy/the truer is my harte  
The more I suffre/the lesse the fyre releaseth  
The more I complayne the more is my smarte  
The more I se her/the sharper is the darte  
The more I wyte/the more my teeres dystyll  
The more I loue/the hotter is my wyll



O most fayre lady / yonge / good / and vertuous  
I knowe full well / neuer your countenaunce  
Shewed me ony token / to make me amercous  
But what for that / your prudent gouernaunce  
Hath encreased my herte / for to gyue attendaunce  
Your excellent beaute / you coude no thyng lette  
To cause my herte vpon you to be sette

My ryght fayre lady / yf at the chesse I drawe  
My selfe I knowe not / as a cheke frome a mate  
But god aboue the whiche sholde haue in awe  
By drede truely every true estate  
He maye take vengeaunce / though he tary late  
He knoweth my mynde / he knoweth my remedy  
He maye reuenge me / he knoweth my Jeopardy

O thou fayre fortune / torne not fro me thy face  
Remembre my sorowe / for my goodly lady  
My tendre herte / she dooth full oft embrace  
And as of that it is no wonder why  
For vpon her is all my destiny  
Submyttinge me / vnto her gracious will  
She for to saue or sodaynly to spyll

O ryght fayre lady of grene flouryng age  
you can not do but as your frendes agree  
your wyte is grete / you mekenes / dooth not swage  
Exyle by dayne / and be ruled by pety  
The frenshe man sayth / that shall be shall be  
yf that I dye / louer was neuer none  
Deyed in this worlde / for a fayrer persone  
The con. of lo.

C. 1.

*Poena pedecundo*

4 v 396 f 15 r 2 l 1 d 3 ff 902 n 2 f 4 v 3 n 2 182



Your beaute caueth all my ainyte  
Why sholde your beaute to my dethe condyscende  
your vertue and mekenes/dyde so arest me  
Why sholde ye than to dame dysdayne intende  
your prudence your goodnes/dooth inercy extende  
Why sholde ye than enclyne to cruelse  
your grace I trust wpll non extremyte

A dere herte I maye complayne ryght longe  
you herte me not/noz se me not araped  
Noz causes my paynes for to be stronge  
It was myn eyes/that made me fyrst dysmayne  
With stroke of loue/that coude not me delaye  
My ryght fayre lady/my herte is colde and faynt  
Wolde now to god/that you knede my complaynte

Thus as I mourned I herde a lady speke  
I loked asyde I sawe my lady gracyous  
My herte than faced/as it sholde breke  
For perfyte Joye whiche was solacyous  
Befoze her grace/ryght swete and pretious  
I kneled doune/laynege with all mekenesse  
Please it your grace/& excellent noblenes

No dyspleasure to take for my beyng here  
For fortune me brought/to this place ryall  
Where I haue wonne this floure so bettuous & dere  
This swerde and shelde/also not peregall  
To wadre hym aduenture to be tryumphall  
And now by fortunes desteny and fate  
Do here my duety vnto your hygh estate



Jhesu sayd she than/who hadde wende to fynde  
your selfe walkynge/in this place all alone  
Full lytell thought I/ye were not in my mynde  
What is the cause/that ye make suche mone  
I thynke some thyng/be from you past and gone  
But I wonder/how that ye dyde attayne  
This floure/this werde/the helde also certayne

For by a lady in the antyquyte  
They were made to a meruaylous entente  
That none sholde get them/but by auctoryte  
Whiche onely by fortune/sholde hyder be sent  
Full many knyghtes by entendement  
Hath them aduentred/to haue them in dede  
But all was vayne/for they myght neuer spede

Wherfore surely/ye are moche fortunate  
Them for to wyne by your aduenture  
But it was no thyng to you ordynate  
And you dyde well/to put your selfe in bze  
To proue the Jeoperdy/whiche hath made you sure  
Leue all your mournynge/for there is no wyght  
Hath greter cause/for to be gladde and lyght

I behelde well her demure countenaunce  
Unto her swete wordes/gyuyng good audyence  
And than I marked in my remembraunce  
Her pleasaunt apparayle/with all my dyligence  
Whiche was full ryche of meruaylous excellence  
Fyrst aloue her forheed/full properly was dressed  
Under her ozellettes/her golden heere well tressed

The con. of lo.

C. ii.



About her necke whyte as ony lily  
A pretty chayne of the fynest golde  
Some lynkes with grene enameled truely  
And some were blacke / the whiche I dyde beholde  
The baynes blew / in her fayre necke well tolde  
With her swete bysage tydynges to my herte  
That sodynly my thoughtes were avertere

Her gowne was golde / of the clothe of tyllowe  
With armys poudred / and wyde sleues pendaunt  
Her kytell grene of the fyne satyn newe  
To bere her longe trayne / was well attendaunt  
Gentyll dame dyligence / neuer barpaunt  
Than as touchynge her noble stature  
I thynke there can be / no goodlyer creature

As of her auge / so tendre and grene  
Fayre / gracypus / prudent / and lounge humplyte  
Her vertue shyneth / beynge bygght and shene  
In her is nether pryde ne sybtyltye  
Her gentyll herte / enclyneth to bounte  
Thus beaute / godlynesse / vertue / grace / and wytte  
With bounte and mekenesse / in this lady is knytte  
¶ Amour.

Thus whan my eyes hadde beholde her wele  
Madame I sayd how may I now be gladde  
But sygh and sorowe with herte every dele  
Longe haue I loued / and lytell conforzte hadde  
Wherfoze no wonder though that I be sadde  
your tendre age / full lytell knoweth ywys  
To loue vnloved / what wofull payne it is



**C Ducell.**

Aghe that I be yonge/ yet I haue perceuerance  
at ther is no lady/ yf that she gentyll be  
I ye haue with her ony acquayntaunce  
And after cast/ to her your ampte  
Grounded on honoure/ without duplycte  
I wolde thynke in mynde/ she wolde condescende  
To graunt your fauoure/ yf ye none yll intende

**C Amour.**

A fayre lady I haue vnto her spoken  
That I loue best/ and she dooth not it knowe  
Though vnto her/ I haue my mynde broken  
Her beuact clere/ dooth my herte ouerthrowe  
Whan I do se her/ my herte dooth sobbe I trowe  
Wherfore fayre lady/ all dysparate of conforzte  
I speke vnkowen/ I must to wo resozte

**C Ducell.**

We thynke ye speke/ now vnder parable  
Do ye se her here/ whiche is cause of your grefe  
Yf ye so dyde/ than wolde I be able  
As in this cause/ to be to your relefe  
Ryght lothe I were to se your myschefe  
For ye knowe well/ what case that I am yn  
Peryllous it wolde be/ or that ye coude me wyne

**C Amour.**

Madame sayd I/ though myn eyes se her not  
Made dymme w<sup>ch</sup> wepynde/ & with grete wo togyder  
yet dooth myn herte/ at this tyme I wote  
Her excellent beaute/ ryght inwardly concyder  
God fortune I trust/ hath now brought me hyder  
To se your mekenes/ whiche doth her repayre  
Whose swete conforzte/ dooth kepe me fro dyspayre

The con. of lo.

C.iii.



Pastyme of  
Pleasure.

¶ Ducell.

Of late I sawe aboke of your makynge  
Called the pastyme of pleasure / whiche is wōd  
For I thynge and you had not ben in louynge  
Ye coude neuer haue made it so sentencyou  
I redde there all your passage daungerous  
Wherfore I wene for the fayre ladyes sake  
That ye dyd loue / ye dyde that boke so make

¶ Amour.

For sothe madame / I dyde compyle that boke  
As the holy goost / I call vnto wytnes  
But ygnorauntly / who so lyst to loke  
Many meruelous thynges in it / I do expresse  
My lyue and loue / to enierche well doubleste  
Many a one doth wypte / I knowe not what in dede  
Yet the effecte dooth folowe / the trouthe for to spede

¶ Ducell.

I graunt you well / all that whiche you saye  
But tell me who it is / that ye loue so sure  
I promyse you that I wyll not bewraye  
Her name truely to any creature  
Byte it is / you sholde suche wo endure  
I do perceyue / she is not ryght ferre hence  
Whiche that ye loue / wihtouten neclygence

¶ Amour.

Surely madame / syth it pleaseth your hyghnesse  
And your honour to speke so nobly  
It is your grace / that hath the intresse  
In my true herte / with loue so feruently  
Ryght longe ago / your beaute sodanly  
Entred my mynde / and hath not syth de kayde  
With feruent loue / moost wofully arayde



**C Ducell.**

And is it I/that is cause of your loue  
If it so be I can not helpe your payne  
It sholde be harde/to gete to your aboue  
We for to loue/I dyde not you constayne  
Ye knowe what I am/I knowe not you certayne  
I am as past your loue to specyfy  
Why wyll ye lone where is no remedy

**C Amour.**

A madame you are cause of my languyshe  
Ye maye me helpe/If that it to you please  
To haue my purpose/my herte dooth not menythe  
Thoughe I was seke/ye knewe not my dyssease  
I am not hole/your mercy maye me ease  
To proue what I am/the holy goost werke styll  
My lyfe and deth/I yelde no we to your wyll

**C Ducell.**

Fortune me thynke/is meruaylous fauorable  
To you by getyng of this ryall floure  
Hauynge this swerde/and shelde so profytable  
In mortall daungers/to be your socoure  
But as touchynge your loue and fauoure  
I can not graunt/neither fyrst ne last  
Ye knowe what I am/ye knowe my loue is past

**C Amour.**

Madame the floure/the swerde and shelde also  
Whiche fortune gate me/are not halfe so dere  
As your persone the cause of my wo  
Whose grace and beaute/shyneth so ryght clere  
That in my herte your beaute doth appere  
Nothynge is past/but that fortunes pleasure  
May call it agayne/in the tyme future



**C Ducell.**

I denye not but that your dedes do shewe  
By meruaylous promes/truely your gentylnesse  
To make you a carter/there were not afewe  
But tho by craft/whiche thought you to oppresse  
To accombre them selfe applye the betynesse  
yet thynke not you/so soone to be a cradle  
I graunt you loue/whan ye were golden saddle

**C Amour.**

Madame truely/it is oft dayly sene  
Many a one dooth trust/his fortune to take  
From another man/to make hym blynde I wene  
Whiche blyndeth hym/and dooth his pompe aslake  
Ofcen some bye/do fall alore and quake  
Ryght so maye they/whiche dyde fyrst pzevence  
My wo and payne for all they? yll scyence

**C Ducell.**

To loue me so/whiche knoweth my persone  
And my frendes eke/me thynke ye are not wyse  
As now of me conforzte haue ye none  
Wherfore this answere/maye to you suffyse  
I can not do/but as my frendes deuyse  
I can no thynge do/but as they accorde  
They haue me promest/to a myghty lorde

**C Amour.**

Madame in this worlde ben but thynges twayne  
As loue and hate/ye knowe your selfe the trouthe  
yf I holde hate/you/deth I were worthy playne  
Than had you cause/with me to be wrothe  
To deserue dyspleasure/my herte wolde be lothe  
Wherfore saye lady/I yelde at this hower  
To your mekenes/my herte my loue and power



**Ducell.**

wynke you past all chyldy ygnoraunce  
gladde I am yf prudence be your guyde  
race cometh often after gouernaunce  
Beware of foly/beware of inwarde pryde  
Clymbe not to fast/but yet fortune abyde  
For your loue I thanke you yf trouthe haue it fyrte  
As with yll thought/neuer for to be myrte

**Amour.**

Surely my mynde/noz yet my purpose  
In any cause by foly dyde vary  
Neuer doyng thynke open ne close  
That to your honour sholde be contrary  
As yet for grace I am content to tary  
For myn enmyes fraude and subtylnes  
Whiche pryuely begyne theyz owne unhappynesse

**Ducell.**

Now of trouthe I do vnto you tell  
The thynge y to your enmyes is moost dyspleasure  
As for to gouerne you by wysdome ryght well  
That causeth enuy in theyz hertes to endure  
But be ye pacient and ye shall be sure  
Suche thynges as they ordayne vnto your gref  
Wyll lyght on them to theyz owne myschefe

**Amour.**

Surely I thynke/I suffred well the phyppe  
The nette also dydde teche me on the waye  
But me to bere I trowe they lost a lyppe  
For the lyfte hande extendyd my Journaye  
And not to call me for my spozte and playe  
Wherfore by foly yf that they do synne  
The holy goost maye well the batayle wynde



**C Ducell.**

Yf fortune wolde / for the payne ye haue taken  
I wolde graunt you loue / but it may nothynge a  
My loue is past / it can not be forlaken  
Therefore I praye you leue your trauaile  
Full lothe I were / your deeth to be wayle  
There is no nette / nor no tempted snare  
But ye them knowe / wherfore ye maye beware

**C Amour.**

The snares and nettes / set in fondye maner  
Doone in tyme past / made many abyde a daye  
The tempted gynnes / were sette so cyrculer  
But euermore it is an olde sayd sawe  
Examples past dooth theche one to withdraue  
Frome all suche perylls / wherfore than maye I  
By grace of god / beware full parfytly

**C Ducell.**

Ye saye the trouthe / and I do not submytte  
My wyll and thought to the lady Venus  
As she is goddesse / and doth true loue knytte  
Byght so to determyne / the mater betwene vs  
With assent of fortune / so good gracious  
Beseechynge you now for to holde you styll  
For these two ladies / maye your mynde fulfyll

**C Amour.**

My ryght dere lady / I do thereto consente  
Swete are your wordes they confort my thought  
Of Venus and fortune / I abyde the Iugement  
But ryght dere lady / whome I longe haue sought  
Forgete me not / remembre loue dere bought  
Of my herte / I wolde ye knewe the preyte  
Than as I thynke ye wolde remembre me



That came laoues  
he our talkynge/ & tyme dyde surrendre  
Dame/ye do well here repayre  
ly temple/for to take the ayre  
only that sodaynly/ I truely awoke  
Takynge pen and ynke to make this lytell boke

Go lytell treatyse submyte the humbly  
To euery lady/ excusynge thy neglygence  
Beseechynge them/ to remembre truely  
How thou dost purpose to do thy dylgence  
To make suche bokes by true experyence  
From dape to dape/ rather to attende  
Rather to dye/ than than to olde them offende

Imprynted  
by me Wynkyn de  
Woide.





Jos. Brereton

1937

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William Caxton 1474



